CCAP Calls on the Prime Minister to Prioritize Afghanistan in Government Mandate

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Afghan Youth Engagement and Development Initiative (AYEDI)

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau prepares to swear in his new cabinet this month, Afghan-Canadians eagerly await the announcement of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship — and we strongly urge implementation of decisive and immediate actions to resettle Afghans in need of urgent protection.

The Canadian Campaign for Afghan Peace (CCAP) positions and calls to action have received numerous endorsements over the last month, including the Liberal Party pledging to resettle 40,000 Afghan refugees. We are pleased to hear the government is committed to this number; however, the timeline remains non-existent. The crisis in Afghanistan continues to escalate— endless streams of reports from Afghanistan detail persecution, discrimination and brutal violence, especially against vulnerable groups, including women, girls, and ethnic and religious minorities. The crisis is increasingly time-sensitive and further delays will result in an emergency situation with immeasurable loss of civilian lives.

CCAP is calling on the Prime Minister to include in the mandate letter to the next Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, a clear priority to lead government-wide efforts in implementing the commitments made during the election campaign in regards to Afghanistan. Specifically, CCAP calls for the inclusion of a resettlement quota of 40,000 refugees, to be met within the year, increasing to 95,000 over two years.

Thus far, roughly 3,700 Afghans have been resettled; meaning, at this rate, Canada will only afford approximately 18,000 refugees their most basic human right — to live. Without a clear timeline to make good on the commitment, Canada is falling short of its moral obligation to do right by the Afghan people. To meet the 40,000 quota we recommend the Canadian government:

1. Broaden eligibility criteria to allow visa applications from inside Afghanistan, especially for vulnerable Afghans
2. Assign Afghan refugees prima facie refugee designation, waiving the bureaucratic requirement that an applicant must be recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR or a foreign state
3. Increase funding and resources to resettlement agencies and Afghan-led organizations in Canada to support newcomer Afghan resettlement and integration
4. Ensure that the Afghan-Canadian community is consulted with and actively engaged in policies responding to the crisis

Thousands of Canadians have family in Afghanistan, including many of the CCAP's members, whose lives hang in the balance. The mandate letter to the next Minister must reflect the urgency of the Afghan crisis. CCAP and the Afghan-Canadian community are looking forward to the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party of Canada making good on their election platform promises and policy commitments towards Afghanistan.

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BACKGROUND

The Canadian Campaign for Afghan Peace represents a united cross-section of voices from the Afghan community in Canada calling on Canadian politicians to take immediate action for Afghanistan. It is an initiative under the Afghan Youth Engagement and Development Initiative (AYEDI), a non-partisan organization that aims to build the mental, psychological, and emotional health of Afghan youth in Canada through civic engagement, community leadership, and mentorship opportunities. AYEDI's focus is on providing opportunities for and building the capacity of Afghan-Canadian youth to express their voices and be heard. For more information on CCAP, go to www.ayedi.ca/ccap.

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